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S E C R E T AMMAN 002907

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [LE](#) [SA](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE: IRANIAN AIRCRAFT

REF: A. STATE 104864

[1](#)B. AMMAN 2693

Classified By: AMBASSADOR EDWARD W. GNEHM; REASONS, 1.5 (B),(C), AND (D)

[1](#)1. (S) THE DCM MADE THE POINTS IN REF A ON JUNE 2 TO ALI AL-AYED, THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO FOREIGN MINISTER MUASHER. AFTER REVIEWING THE SUBSTANCE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE TO THE MINISTER ON MAY 27 (REF B), THE DCM EXPRESSED OUR DEEP CONCERN THAT THE IRANIAN PLANE HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO OVERFLY JORDAN.

[1](#)2. (S) POINTING OUT THAT THE JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES HAD INTERCEPTED ARMS TRANSITING JORDAN IN RECENT MONTHS, THE DCM ARGUED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR JORDAN TO BLOCK THE ARMS FROM REACHING TERRORIST GROUPS IN THE FIRST PLACE THAN TO LEAVE THE JOB ENTIRELY TO THE SECURITY SERVICES, HOWEVER SUCCESSFUL THEY MAY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST. HE SAID THE U.S. IS REVIEWING ITS PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING THIS ISSUE, AND URGED THAT THE JORDANIANS UNDERTAKE A PARALLEL REVIEW.

[1](#)3. (S) AL-AYED POINTED OUT THAT JORDAN HAD BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT IN SUPPORTING THE WAR ON TERRORISM. JORDAN WOULD NOT BE DETERRED FROM COUNTERTERRORIST EFFORTS BY ANY FRICTION WITH IRAN -- "WE DON'T CARE WHAT THEY THINK." HOWEVER, AL-AYED WENT ON TO SAY:

-- THE IRANIAN AIRCRAFT WAS IN JORDANIAN AIRSPACE FOR ONLY A FEW MINUTES. IT OVERFLEW SAUDI ARABIA FOR A MUCH LONGER TIME BEFORE REACHING JORDAN. THE SAUDIS WERE THEREFORE BETTER PLACED TO BLOCK THE FLIGHT THAN THE JORDANIANS. (THE DCM MENTIONED THAT WE HAD APPROACHED THE SAUDIS, AND SAID THAT TO BE EFFECTIVE THE EFFORT NEEDED TO BE COOPERATIVE, INVOLVING ALL OUR FRIENDS IN THE REGION.)

-- OUR ALERT GAVE THE JORDANIANS VERY LITTLE TIME TO REACT. (THE DCM AGREED THAT OUR CALL ON MAY 29 -- AFTER THE PLANE WAS WELL ON ITS WAY -- CAME FAIRLY LATE, BUT ARGUED THAT THE JORDANIANS MIGHT HAVE RECOGNIZED THE PROFILE OF THE IRANIAN AIRCRAFT FROM OUR EARLIER DEMARCHE AND DENIED CLEARANCE OR CONSULTED WITH US.)

[1](#)4. (S) AL-AYED SAID HE WOULD TALK THROUGH OUR DEMARCHE WITH THE MINISTER AND OTHERS AS APPROPRIATE. HE PROMISED A QUICK POLICY RESPONSE. THE DCM REPEATED THAT WE WOULD WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE PROCEDURES, AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE THAT WASHINGTON ATTACHES TO THE ISSUE.

COMMENT

[1](#)5. (S/NF) AL-AYED HAS MENTIONED IN THE PAST THAT MOST OF OUR ALERTS ON IRANIAN FLIGHTS TURN OUT TO BE FALSE ALARMS. THE JORDANIANS MAY WELL FEAR THAT OUR INFORMATION IS AMBIGUOUS, AND THAT BY DENYING FLIGHT CLEARANCE THEY COULD BE INVOLVING THEMSELVES IN AN EMBARRASSING POLITICAL SITUATION. WE RECOMMEND THAT WASHINGTON SHARE RELEVANT INFORMATION WITH THE JORDANIANS (ORCA CONCURS). ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THE JORDANIANS WOULD CLEARLY BE MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE DENYING OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCES IF THE SAUDIS TOOK SIMILAR ACTION.

Gnehm